EXHIBITION OF LITHOGRAPHS

BY MEMBERS OF THE
SENEFELDER CLUB OF LONDON

FROM THE PRINT ROOMS OF
MR. HILL TOLERTON
SAN FRANCISCO

Museum of History, Science and Art

Exposition Park, Los Angeles
Dec. 1 to 15, 1915

EVERETT C. MAXWELL, CURATOR
ELIZABETH DEUEL, ASSISTANT

ALOYS SENEFELDER

(1771-1834)

Was the inventor of lithography and practically every method now used was his.

Lithography, in a word, is a process by which exact facsimiles of drawings or paintings may be multiplied by printing from stone having equal affinity for grease and water. The original drawing may be made directly upon the stone or upon paper and then transferred to the stone. Among artists this second method is for obvious reasons the more common. The lithographic crayon, chalk or pencil is made of a greasy substance which, after application to the surface of the lithographic stone is fixed by an acid solution which, however, produces neither an incised nor a raised line upon the stone. From the flat surface of the stone direct printing is done, the ink adhering to the drawing and being repelled by the exposed surface of the stone. Lithography in color requires the use of a separate stone for each color.

EXTRACTS FROM

"A COMPLETE COURSE IN LITHOGRAPHY"

By ALOYS SENEFELDER

THE INVENTION

"I had just ground a stone plate smooth to pursue on it reverse printing, when my mother asked me to write a laundry list for her. We could find no paper. Even the writing ink was dried up. . . . I wrote the list on the clean stone, with my prepared ink, intending to copy it as soon as paper was supplied. As I was preparing afterwards to wash the writing from the stone I became curious to see what would happen if the stone were now etched with *aqua fortis.* I poured a mixture of one part *aqua fortis* and ten part water over the stone. . . . A few strokes had been slightly injured, but the others had hardly lost. Eagerly I began inking in. I used a leather ball, and inked (covered) it with oil varnish and lampblack. I patted the inscription many times with this ball. The letters all took the color well. The new art was invented."

THE PERFECTION

"In pen or chalk drawings all the lines and points which are to be printed are drawn with a greasy matter on the stone itself. But there is another manner in lithography where the drawing or writing with the same unctuous composition is made on paper and transferred from thence to the stone and printed from it. And I am strongly inclined to believe that it is the principal and most important part of my discovery. It will be of the utmost benefit to artists by enabling them to obtain facsimiles *(multiplication)* of their drawings. I wish from the bottom of my heart to gain friends to this matter . . . in order that artists may devote themselves to its improvement."

(FROM INTERNATIONAL STUDIO, MARCH, 1914)

THE SENEFELDER CLUB AND THE REVIVAL OF ARTISTIC LITHOGRAPHY

In the revival of artistic lithography, the Senefelder Club has played no small part—yet the Club has grown out of the revival—the revival is not due to it. But like other movements, when the time came, the Senefelder Club was ready, springing full-born from the lithography of the past, full of the traditions of the past—and full too of the life of the present.

But far more is due to the encouragement given to artistic lithography by the Editor of THE STUDIO from the very first number, in which was a print by R. W. Macbeth, and this was followed by a long series—a series which continued for many years—of distinguished drawings in lithography made by artists of distinction, prominent among whom was Whistler, and Whistler practised lithography not as so many have done, because they thought it the thing, but because he found it a sympathetic, responsive medium. His lithographs were always appreciated by the few but their reception by the many was mixed. "Piccadilly," in which by lithography he hoped to appeal to the public, collapsed almost with the first print. True, "The Whirlwind," a now forgotten paper, carried on a cyclonic existence at the price of a penny a number for some months, but even the fact that Whistler contributed three lithographs to it could not keep it alive though his prints sold out the numbers containing them, mainly to careful collectors, who have since unloaded their copies at many hundred per cent. profit—as your collector sometimes does. Whistler's hope that he could appeal to the people through lithography, and by cheap publications, was rudely dispelled, and he soon found that those who collected his lithographs were the same as those who treasured his etchings, and that though lithographs could be, like etchings, printed in unlimited numbers, the people cared nothing for them and when so printed the collector

of the time would not have them. To stop or discourage this cheapening, lowering, of lithographs is one of the aims of the Senefelder Club. But in those far-away days there was a feeling for art among artists, and there were two or three artists—Whistler, Keene, Beardsley—artists who were something more than shopkeepers running swell shops called studios. They wanted to publish their works, and lithography was in the air, and lithographs appeared month after month in THE STUDIO, "The Art Journal," "The Magazine of Art," "The Albermarle," "The Pageant," "The Savoy." Even the names of most of these publications are forgotten, all save THE STUDIO are dead. Then came the centenary of lithography and the great exhibitions in London at South Kensington, in Paris, and in New York at the Grolier Club. The painters, who are always all there, rushed in, made their one lithograph at the bidding of F. Goulding and the Academy, and were sure it would bring them fortune and maybe fame, which did not so much matter, but as neither one nor the other arrived at once, they abandoned lithography immediately; it did not pay—pay, pay, pay, is the cry of the painter in the land; even the Academy, which had endured lithography, spurned it, and critics ignored it, or, in their ignorance, described it as a pleasing fashion of reproduction. Dealers mostly would have nothing to do with it—it was only lithography, a commercial process, oblivious of the fact that their pockets were filled by the fabrications of the most commercial etchers. Port-folios were issued, posters were made, books were illustrated by lithography. A few artists, following Whistler—Legros, Shannon, Thomson, and Rothenstein—took it up, some even getting presses and doing their own printing, but scarce any one wanted their prints. Neither the people nor the prophets would have lithography, the presses were abandoned and the prints remained in the artists' portfolios or the cabinets of the dealers.

There were other and more vital reasons why the revival of artistic lithography was so long in coming: mystery and expense drove most artists from it. I doubt if it will be believed, but it is a fact, that until Whistler had some of his lithographs printed in Paris he saw

nothing of etching or printing them; he made a drawing either on stone or paper, handed it to the printer, and then he knew nothing more—and was not allowed to see anything more—till he got proof of it; at least, this was the case during many years. In one shop where he worked there was a closed door which opened to none but the proprietor and the printer, never to the artist. He succeeded in lithography, but it was because he triumphed over this secrecy and mystery: he succeeded despite it—most others succumbed to it. And it was not until the County Council started classes of lithography, ably carried on by Mr. Jackson, that the secrets and the mysteries were exposed and found to be mostly made up of lemon juice, trade unionism, stale beer and hide-bound stupidity. And then text-books began to be published, and really the great encouragers of lithography, as they have described themselves and been described, began under the instruction and direction of artists to learn a little themselves. The revival of artistic lithography has come about despite the difficulties caused by professional lithographers, not because, as is usually said, of their encouragement. For the British lithographer as a rule loathes the artist and hates to have him about.

From the schools comes the "Neolith," a magazine illustrated, written and printed entirely by lithography. Some of the more brilliant younger men found in lithography, in the "Neolith," a most sympathetic method of work and they have continued to practise it with success ever since. Soon they found another difficulty besides secrecy; that had broken down, but they could not break down expense, which has been in the hands of some of these worthy advocates of the artistic importance of lithography—provided the lithographs were printed in their shops — the great reason why the revival of artistic lithography has bees so long in coming about—artists in this country could not afford to practise it. And the loudest advocates charged the highest prices for their work, and sent in their bills promptly; and then two things happened: the faint-hearted and light-pocketed were driven away, while those who cared and had money enough bought presses of their own. Will it be believed that some of the British firms which

most loudly were calling upon artists to come to them and practise the art charged those who came more than American prices, and twice as much as equally good work is done for here by workmen with no arty-and-crafty pretensions? I do not say that in every case the professional printer was a drawback. Thomas Way drew Whistler's attention to lithography; he helped the artist, and Mr. Bray, the printer, carried out his instructions. But had Whistler been allowed to work in the shop instead of spending his time in the office waiting for proofs, to etch his plates, and to stand over the printer, we should have had more and more remarkable lithographs from him. As for the rest of us we were simply driven away by the cost of printing. With one's own press and a capable printer, one can do for eighteenpence what some of these encouragers of lithography charge twenty-five shillings for doing, after the artists have told them how to do it!

These are then the reasons why the revival has been so long on the way. But now the artists have broken open the closed door between the office and the shop, have been given fair prices, laughed at the stupid regulations of the trade union—will it be believed, in this country a printer may not move a stone under penalty of something happening to him from the union?—and there are men in each shop who do nothing else but count stones. Artists have studied in the schools, bought their own presses, found new ways of working, and the revival has come about, the tide has turned. We have had much to contend with —the apathy, the unwillingness till lately of most dealers to sell, to show, or even to have in their shops or galleries a lithograph. If you asked them why—they were too big. You pointed out that the badder and bigger an etching was the better and quicker it sold; that a good lithograph might be big—that some of the biggest were the best. Well, nobody wanted them. Finally the reason, the real root of the matter, was disclosed. Dealers—there always have been exceptions—did not want lithographs because they finally confessed if they sold them, as they easily could, it would interfere with their trade in real hand-made manufactured, boomed and inflated-priced copper plates which they happened to control, or the hack they owned who

turned them out. Therefore, till lately, collectors were warned against the lithograph, and as most collectors are the products of most dealers, they did as they were bid and avoided the lithograph. Here, too, there have been exceptions and there are now many notable collections of lithographs being formed both publicly and privately. Another matter: little as the average art criticism of this country is worth, if it is of no artistic value it is useful as an advertisement; but most British art critics' art writing is confined to oil paint—and among oil painters, to their pals—or else they belong to a family of parrots who all repeat the same prattle and syndicate it round the country. These critics, not knowing anything about art, fight shy of lithography and still refuse to notice it, and we lose much amusement, because some of them have become from sad experience rather conscious that when they write they make themselves ridiculous. So knowing nothing, they ignore — instead of finding out about — lithography.

On the other hand, there are some admirably equipped critics in the country who now realize the importance of the graphic arts and lithography amongst them. In the British and South Kensington Museum collections under the present able keepers of the departments of prints; in German, French and Italian galleries; and in the great collection in the Library of Congress at Washington the best modern examples of the revival of lithography are being gathered together. And there are dealers now who show the works of living men, and who are proving that lithography is as vital, as personal a form of art, as etching or engraving.

It was to break away from the professional printer, to educate the critic, to help the collector, to win the support of the dealer—and, about all, to do the best work we could—and, as our rules say, to "encourage artistic lithography," that the Senefelder Club was started at a meeting called some five years ago in the studio of J. Kerr-Lawson. A little group of four men soon got together nad founded the club—A. S. Hartrick, F. Ernest Jackson, J. Kerr-Lawson and myself. We took a studio, bought a press and hired a printer. We would not only print our own

designs, but for a consideration those of embryo lithographers who would hang about the door waiting their turn to use the press. There would soon be more presses and copperplate presses, and finally wealth beyond the dreams of Matisse and all his backers, and it should all come out of the Senefelder Club. But before all this came to pass the proprietor of the studio wanted it for a kindergarten. The press was taken over by one of the four as a bad debt, the printer vanished, and so did all this part of our programme. We broke in the door of the professional printer, or bought presses. Mr. Marchant became our agent, and we added members to our little society. In the five years of our history we have seen artistic lithography again restored to its right rank among the fine arts; we have succeeded in adding to our membership such practising artists as Anthony Barker, H. Becker, F. Brangwyn, John Copley, Miss Gabain, John McLure Hamilton, Miss Hope, Spencer Pryse, D. A. Wehrschmidt, in fact all the artist lithographers of Great Britain who have made a name for themselves save Rothenstein, Shannon and Sullivan, and we hope ere long they will be amongst us as they are with us. The directors and keepers of the Luxembourg, the Print Rooms of the British and Victoria and Albert Museums and of the Library of Congress have become honorary members and we have a lay membership of over one hundred. We have a home at the gallery of Goupil & Co. in London, where our fifth exhibition has just been held. We have given forty-five exhibitions in the Provinces, on the Continent, and in the United States, and several in London. As a Society, we have exhibited in almost all the great national and international exhibitions, on several occasions representing this country. And we have found a practical printer whose pleasure and pride it is to help us in our experiments and let us work freely in his shop.

We feel that to have accomplished these things in five years is something to be proud of. But we are proudest of the fact that, through the Club, we have in this country helped to bring about the revival of artistic lithography. Another great factor in our favor has been the recent developments in technique and mechanism, developments

which will bring the artist again in touch with it. Lithography languished for years because the original artist was forced out of the art by the professional litho-artist, a copyist usually skilled in the highest degree, capable of anything but making a work of art, though some distinguished artists were trained as lithographers. Then it was taken up by commerce and that came near killing it, and another blow was struck by wood engraving, for a lithograph until yesterday could not be printed with type as a wood or process block can, and in an age when every "work of art" is founded on cheapness and hustle, lithography was out of it. Within a few months all this has been changed. Not only can a lithograph now be printed on an ordinary press with type, but the photographer, the curse of modernity, and the engraver, usually no better, have been completely eliminated, and in a short while the artist's lithograph will, as an illustration, be given straight into the reader's hands. Whether he will have the sense to appreciate it, doesn't so much matter, but all artists will, and this will cause the greatest revival of artistic lithography and it will come about in the immediate future. Other causes for the revival are the improvements in transfer paper, and the wonderful discovery of the method of transferring—but at the same time preserving—the artist's drawings. Senefelder speaks of this, but it has only been practised within the last few years.

Still now we can say, in the words of Senefelder, our patron, with which he closed his invaluable book, "The Complete Course of Lithography" (1819): "I desire it [lithography] may spread over the whole world, bringing much good to humanity through many excellent productions, and that it may never be used for evil purposes. This grant the Almighty. Then may the hour be blessed in which I created it."

JOSEPH PENNELL,
Pesident Senefelder Club.

CATALOGUE

The numbers given in parenthesis following the titles are the size of the edition.

BAERSTOEN, A.

1 Ondernarde
2 Barges Under Snow, London

BARKER, ANTHONY

3 The Meet
4 The Road to Long
5 Belgium in Peace

BRANGWYN, FRANK

6 The Furnace
7 Drink
8 St. Paul's
9 Pool, London
10 Unloading Oranges

BUTLER, H.

11 The Plough
12 Ploughing

COPLEY, JOHN

13 The Grain Market
14 Hammers
15 Pas de Ballet
16 Two Gentlemen Descending to the Stalls

CREIGHTON, MISS

17 Chinese Robe
18 Toilette

GABIAN, ETHEL

19 Sulphide
20 The Striped Petticoat
21 Terrace Susolelee
22 La Toilette
23 Caprice
24 Aux Boids de la Seine
25 Sous le Reneibere

HAMILTON, J. McLURE

26 Mr. Gladstone
27 Tomb in Bath Abbey
28 The Bishop

HARTRICK, A. S.

29 The Widower
30 The Little Smithy
31 The Blacksmiths

HOPE, E. A.

32 The Tramp
33 Corner of the Quay
34 Satyr's Music
35 Tambour
36 Wayside Musicians
37 Buccaneer

JACKSON, F. ERNEST

38 The Velvet Dress
39 Portrait of Jos. Fels
40 The Fur Coat
41 L'Eglise St. Riquier, Charters
42 The Back Garden
43 Le Chateau d'Amboise

LAWSON, J. KERR

44 Randazzo
45 St. Paul's
46 St. Botolph's Church

PENNELL, JOSEPH

47 The Little Dancer
48 The Dump
49 Air Ship Shed
50 The Iron Gate, Charleroi
51 Laon, the Market

PERCIVAL, H.

52 Harvesters Drinking
53 Age and Youth in the Harvest Field

PRYSE, SPENCER

54 The Bath
55 Bedilia
56 They that Go Up to the Merciful Town

SULLIVAN, E. J.

57 The Scarns
58 The Love of Zephyrus and Flora
59 The Burden of Sisyphus

WEHRSCHMIDT, D. A.

60 Railway Station
61 You Shall Also Mount With Me
62 The Baby Bacchus

These lithographs are for sale and in many cases duplicate prints may be obtained. Prices and information may be had at the desk.